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ABSTRACT

The first year of work has been completed by a consortium composed of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE) and seven interested states to support the cooperative development, field testing, and implementation of competency based modules for the preparation of local administrators of vocational education. An outgrowth of a federally supported NCRVE research and development effort which identified and nationally verified 166 competencies of vocational administrators, each module covers a single broad competency or skill area (usually encompassing two or more related subtasks) needed by local administrators to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Individual state funds are used to support the development and field testing of one module, but by virtue of consortium participation, each member state has immediate and equal access to all the modules being developed. Using a cooperative development process, the consortium states vote on priority competencies for module development and nominate qualified persons who can assist National Center staff as either consultant writers or reviewers. At that point, National Center staff begin coordination of the four stage development process: (1) preparation of the module prospectus; (2) preparation of a field review version; (3) preparation of a field test version; and (4) the published edition. Advantages of the consortium approach over individual state efforts include pooling of limited financial resources for curriculum development, shared professional expertise, and avoidance of unnecessary duplication of efforts. (MEK)

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DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL MATERIALS FOR THE PREPARATION OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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Background

The need for increasing numbers of competent administrators of vocational education at both the secondary and postsecondary levels continues. It is no secret that the operation of high quality vocational education programs requires leaders who possess many complex and unique management skills. Many states have established the preservice and inservice training of their local administrators of vocational education as one of their top priorities for personnel development. Unfortunately, the effective training of these administrators has been hampered by the limited knowledge of the competencies needed and by the limited availability of competency-based materials designed to help deliver the important competencies.

In response to this recognized need, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, with USOE sponsorship, launched a two-year research and development effort in 1975 entitled "Development of Competency-Based Instructional Materials for Local Administrators of Vocational Education." The project had two major objectives as follows:

1. To conduct research to identify and nationally verify the competencies considered important to local administrators of vocational education.

2. To develop and field test a series of prototypic competency-based instructional packages and a user's guide.

The identification of competencies was based upon input from a select group of experienced vocational administrators participating in a DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) workshop and on the results of an extensive and comprehensive literature search and review. The merger of the DACUM and literature review task statements resulted in a list of 191 task statements that described all known functions and responsibilities of secondary and postsecondary vocational administrators. These task statements were submitted by questionnaire for verification to a select national group of 130 experienced secondary and postsecondary administrators of vocational education. Ninety-two percent (92%) of these administrators responded to the verification questionnaire and indicated that 166 of the 191 statements were competencies important (median score of 3.0 or higher) to the job of vocational administrator.*

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*For more information about these competencies, see The Identification and National Verification of Competencies Important to Secondary and Postsecondary Administrators of Vocational Education by Robert E. Norton, Kristy L. Ross, Gonzalo Garcia, and Barry Hobart, Columbus, OH: The Center for Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1977.

The development objective of the project led to the tentative clustering of the verified competencies into 30 groups for materials development purposes, and to the development and field testing of six prototypic modules and a user's guide. The original six modules, which are now available from the National Center Publications are:

Organize and Work with a Local Vocational Education Advisory Council
Supervise Vocational Education Personnel
Appraise the Personnel Development Needs of Vocational Teachers
Establish a Student Placement Service and Coordinate Follow-up Studies
Develop Local Plans for Vocational Education (Part I)
Develop Local Plans for Vocational Education (Part II)

The modules were well received by the administrator trainees and the resource persons who utilized them. Some of the strongest support for the materials came from persons in states who are moving (some very rapidly) toward competency- or performance-based professional development programs for vocational teachers and administrators. To deliver upon all of the important competencies verified, additional financial support was needed to develop the remaining modules. Federal support was sought but was unavailable for development purposes. The National Center was encouraged, instead, to seek the involvement of interested state departments of education for financial sponsorship of further development.

Consortium Organized

After much recruitment work, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education and seven interested states organized a Consortium for the Development of Professional Materials for Vocational Education. Beginning on September 1, 1978 the Consortium members combined their efforts to support the cooperative development, field testing, and implementation of competency-based materials for professional vocational educators.

Initial efforts during 1978-79 were focused upon the development of competency-based administrator modules, using as a research base the 166 competencies identified and nationally verified as important to local administrators in the previous USOE-supported National Center research. To deliver upon all the important competencies verified, it was estimated that a total of twenty-five to thirty modules was needed. With six modules having been developed and field tested as part of the original USOE project, the Consortium undertook the development of the additional modules needed at the rate of one module per member state per year.

While their membership became effective at different times during the year, seven states eventually became members during the 1978-79 year. The sponsoring state agencies and/or cooperating educational institutions were as follows:

1. Florida Department of Education and Florida International University
2. Illinois Office of Education and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
3. Ohio Department of Education
4. New York State Education Department
5. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
6. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Temple University
7. Texas Education Agency

Consortium Operation

The Consortium operates through its Board of Members with each member state being entitled to one voting representative. The scope of work of the Consortium is carried out primarily by staff employed at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, with the help of consultants who are employed as either writers or module reviewers to help with the development process.

A brief explanation of several operational procedures will serve to explain how the Consortium functions:

1. Each member state has one vote on the Board of Members which is the legal policy-making body of the Consortium.
2. The Consortium Board meets twice per year, usually in September and March.
3. Consortium members participate in determining module priorities and field-testing procedures.
4. Consortium members nominate consultant writers and reviewers, and participate in field testing.
5. Consortium members have equal and immediate access to all of the materials developed.

Development Procedures

The procedure used in developing and field testing the administrator modules can best be described as a cooperative development process. In one of the first steps, the member states vote to establish the priority competencies for module development. Once the development priorities are established, the state representatives are asked to nominate qualified persons who can assist National Center staff as either consultant module writers or module reviewers. The nominees plus selected others known to the National Center Consortium staff are contacted and asked to apply for the job of consultant writer or reviewer on one or more of the modules to be developed. From these applications, Consortium staff select the most qualified persons available.

A four-stage development process is begun at that point to prepare the modules. The four-stage sequence of development includes (1) preparation of a module prospectus, (2) preparation of a field-review version, (3) preparation of a field-test version, and (4) preparation of the published edition. A brief description of the procedures used at each stage of development follows.

Preparation of the module prospectus.--The module prospectus is usually a four- to eight-page outline of the proposed module. It contains statements of the terminal and enabling objectives, an outline of the topics to be covered in the information sheets, the proposed learning activities and feedback, a tentative list of the performance assessment criteria, and a list of the specific competency statements to be addressed by the module. The prospectus is generally drafted by the Consortium staff member assigned to the module after he or she has analyzed the competencies to be covered and reviewed the available literature. The prospectus is further developed and refined, however, at a one-day conceptualization meeting involving the consultant writers and Consortium staff. Three copies of the refined prospectus are submitted to each state representative for reviews and critiques by the persons they designate. A twenty-day turnaround time is requested so that the module writers can benefit from the critiques received as they prepare the field-review version.

Preparation of the field-review version.--After the conceptualization meeting, the two consultant writers are asked to immediately begin the preparation of information sheets, case studies, model answers, etc., based on their actual knowledge, experience, and expertise in the particular area. At the same time, the National Center staff writer continues the search for relevant literature and sample materials. The staff writer maintains contact with the consultant writers to answer questions, check on progress, and relay information received from the

prospectus critiques. Once materials are received from the two consultants, the staff writer prepares the field-review version by merging, rewriting, editing, and formatting the material into a full-blown draft of the module. It is then reviewed internally by another Consortium staff member before duplication of the field-review copies. Six copies of the field-review version of the module are sent either to the state representative or directly to the persons previously designated for voluntary reviews in each state. A module reviewer's checklist and directions for completing the reviews accompany each module. At the same time, three paid consultant reviewers are also asked to provide a detailed review and written critique of the module. Again, a twenty-day review period is utilized so that the reviewers' comments can be obtained as quickly as possible and used in preparing the field-test version.

Preparation of the field-test version.--All the field-review module checklists and the written suggestions received are summarized and analyzed as the major input into development of the field-test version of the module. Commonly, two or three Consortium staff members review the comments and suggestions for improvement and decide on the changes to be made by the staff writer. When necessary, another consultant may be employed or further work may be requested of one or both of the initial consultants to supply needed material. Once the field-test version has been prepared, it is again reviewed internally by another Consortium staff member before duplication for field test purposes. Each member state and/or cooperative institution of higher education receives thirty copies of each module for field testing. In addition to the modules, field-test guidelines and instruments are provided for use by both the resource persons and administrator trainees. In most states, an orientation and training session has also been conducted to prepare resource persons for their role in field testing.

Preparation of the published edition.--Although this stage of development has not yet been reached, plans call for the summarization and analysis of field-test data from all states as a basis for preparation of the published version of each module by the Consortium staff. It is anticipated that data will be collected from at least five different states and a minimum of fifty administrator trainees before revision is begun. Once published, thirty copies of the module will be supplied to each member state, and additional copies will be available through regular National Center publications channels.

Nature of Modules

Each module covers a single broad competency or skill area (usually encompassing two or more related subtasks) needed by

local administrators to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Through a variety of learning activities, learners obtain background information concerning the skill covered, apply that information in practice or simulated situations, and eventually demonstrate the competency in an actual administrative situation. During the final learning experience, the administrator's performance is assessed by a resource person using a checklist of specific performance criteria.

The modules can be used in preservice or inservice workshops, graduate courses at universities, internship or externship leadership development programs, and other programs. While the modules are designed for individual use, permit self-pacing, and require few outside resources, they are not self-instructional. Preferably, they should be used under the guidance of a qualified resource person who can advise learners and evaluate their progress. This might be a university professor, a state department of education supervisor, or an administrator at the state, regional, or local level.

The funds from an individual state support the development and field testing of one module but, by participating in the Consortium, each member state has immediate and equal access to all the modules being developed. During the first year the following seven modules were developed:

Direct Curriculum Development
Guide the Development and Improvement of Instruction
Provide a Staff Development Program
Direct Program Evaluation
Promote the Vocational Education Program
Manage Student Recruitment and Admissions
Involve the Community in Vocational Education

During 1979-80, the same states are supporting the development of the following seven modules:

Evaluate Staff Performance
Select School Personnel
Coordinate Guidance and Administrative Services for Students
Prepare Vocational Education Budgets
Manage the Purchase of Equipment, Supplies, and Insurance
Obtain Financial Support
Manage Physical Facilities

Summary and Conclusions

The viability of the cooperative development approach as a cost-effective procedure for developing and field testing high quality professional materials that meet the identified needs of

...eral states has been successfully demonstrated through the ...onsortium's first year of operation. Perhaps the best measure ...f the Consortium's success is indicated by the intent of all member states to continue their financial support and participation in the Consortium for a second year.

The formation and operation of the multi-state Consortium has led to the following recognized advantages over individual state efforts:

1. Member states can effectively pool limited financial resources for curriculum development purposes. The cooperative approach permits major savings as compared to the cost of individual state efforts, if such efforts are possible at all.

2. Member states can effectively pool the professional expertise needed to develop, critique, revise, field test, and publish high quality materials addressing many different competencies.

3. Through cooperative development, member states can avoid the unnnecessary duplication of effort and enhance the quality of the materials developed.

For further information on the Consortium, contact Dr. Robert E. Norton, Consortium Program Director, at (614) 486-3655 or (800) 848-4815.